



Annual Membership Meeting

June 23, 2026



STATE of the LEAGUE - LWVHC

The past year has not been easy for democracy-- locally, statewide, or in our nation. Since the spring of 2025 when LWVUS first declared a constitutional crisis, we have been hit with a tsunami of announcements, executive orders, and news stories that had us shaking our collective heads. We may be guilty of overusing the word "unprecedented" but I don't feel guilty because over and over that is how the news has felt. Unprecedented and relentless.

Those are also words to describe how people who care about what is happening have responded. Our League has continued to speak up and show up and through it all. At times we may feel unsure about our impact. And we may not see the impact in legislation or elections yet, but I know that we are making a difference. We are forming important ties and networks with others in the community. Knowing that there are other people who care about what is happening is one of the things that helps us to keep working to make things better.

The Henderson County League rests on the work of those who came before us, the smart and dedicated women who decided in the 1960s that we needed change in our schools. Today we have more than 150 members. Then and now it's the caring and commitment of individuals that ultimately makes a difference.

This annual report highlights the work of our leadership and teams. The short summaries it contains represent their commitment to the ongoing work. Nothing would be possible without the grassroots efforts of our members and donors, our "feet on the street" who keep showing up over and over again. So with thanks to each of them, let's continue to do what we can to defend democracy, educate voters, and bring necessary change!

Liz Hill, LWVHC Board President

LWVHC BOARD LEADERSHIP 2025-2026

President: Liz Hill
Vice-President: Marcella Leshner
Secretary: Lynn McFarland
Treasurer: Nancy Pellegrini
Elected Directors: Mary Landry
Pam Pazoles
Myra Woods

2026 Members Meeting Agenda

PROGRAM

- Welcome – Liz Hill, President
- IceBreaker Bingo
- Francee Sherman Award Presentation - Mary Landry, Education Team Chair
- State of the League: LWVHC – Liz Hill
- Special recognition - Barbara Volk, Lifetime Membership, Outgoing Board Members

BUSINESS MEETING

- Confirmation of quorum
- Vote on 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Vote on 2026-27 budget as provided to members 5/21/26
- Presentation of the Slate for Election by Nominating Committee
- Vote on 2026-2027 slate
- Vote on Program Priorities as provided to members 5/21/26
- Appoint committee to proofread today's meeting minutes

CLOSING REMARKS

- Directions to the Board
- Announcements

LWVHC Annual Meeting Minutes

June 24, 2025

The LWVHC Annual Membership Meeting was held on June 24, 2025, at First Congregational Church of Hendersonville at 5:40 p.m. with President Ernest Mowell in the Chair and Secretary Mary Kay Krokowski present.

A panel discussion was presented with the theme of “Making Our Voice Heard: Communicating with Elected Officials.” Jay Egolf, Henderson County Commissioner, Lyndsey Simpson, Hendersonville City Council, with Renee Kumor as Moderator, presented their recommendations and experience with their constituents. They agreed that email connections are best because these allow research and connections with other pertinent officials to provide thorough, accurate answers.

Mary Landry, chair of the Education Team, introduced Madeleine Cable, this year's recipient of the Francee Sherman Award. Madeleine read her essay on making voting education a required part of the curriculum, responding to the question, “How would you like your vote to affect public schools?”

President Ernest Mowell then presented the “State of the League.” Ernest reviewed the multiple highlights of the past year, enumerating the activities of the teams, the list of programs presented,

the intense work of Voter Services, and participation in the Apple Festival. He acknowledged the hardships of the past year, members affected by Hurricane Helene, the difficult elections, attacks on the Constitution, rejections of state elections results, and the pardoning of the January 6th criminals.

The President announced that the League will continue to do what we do best: to educate, to communicate, and to advocate under our non-partisan status. He encouraged the membership to show up, to empower voters, and always defend democracy.

Special recognition was given to members we lost this year:

- Cynthia Sthreshley
- Jim Liebzeit
- Stan Kumor
- Charlyne Grimes Coleman
- Agnes (Acee) Hughes

BUSINESS MEETING

With President Ernest Mowell in the Chair and Secretary Mary Kay Krokowski present, Nan Jennings, serving as our Parliamentarian, determined a quorum. 36 members were in attendance; the current membership is 145. A quorum over 15% was present as required by our bylaws.

The Secretary moved “to approve the minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting which were reviewed by a committee appointed at that meeting and emailed to the membership on May 24, 2025.” The minutes were approved as corrected. The motion was adopted.

Treasurer Nancy Pellegrini moved “On behalf of the Finance Committee, I move to approve the LWVHC budget as emailed to members on May 24, 2025.” The motion was adopted.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

PROPOSED SLATE for the 2025-2026 YEAR

Nominating Chair Sandra Mowell moved “On behalf of the Nominating Committee, I submit the following slate of nominees for 2025-2026:”

OFFICERS (2-year term expires 2027)

President - Liz Hill

Secretary - Lynn McFarland

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (1-year unexpired term expires 2026)

Vice-President - Marcella Leshner

DIRECTOR (2-year term expires 2027)

Myra Woods

Unfilled - no nominees for this position at this time

DIRECTOR (1-year unexpired term expires 2026)

Pam Pazoles

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (1 year term)

Nan Jennings

Caren Kessler

Patti Rogers

Continuing on Board

Treasurer - Nancy Pellegrini (term expires 2026)

Director - Mary Landry (term expires 2026)

Ex-Officio - Ernest Mowell (serves one year per bylaws until 2026)

The Nominating Chair stated, "The Nominating Committee has submitted the slate. Nominations are now open from the floor." No qualified additional nominations for the unfilled Director position came from the floor.

With no additional nominations for the Director position, the slate was adopted.

Report submitted by LWVHC Nominating Committee (NC) members:

Sandra Mowell, chair

Nan Jennings

Pam Johnson

PROPOSED PRIORITIES for 2025-2026

Liz Hill moved "The program priorities were emailed to members on May 24, 2025. We have provided copies for review today. On behalf of the board, I move to approve the 2025-2026 program priorities as provided to the membership on May 24, 2025." Program Priorities for 2025-2026 are:

- Public Education, to include state and local funding, vouchers, civics education, school board elections and more.
- Representative Government, focusing on communicating with elected officials, redistricting and the recent actions aimed at consolidating power in only one branch of government.
- Immigration, and the impacts on agriculture, healthcare, construction, law enforcement - in short, on our entire community.

The motion was adopted.

Three volunteers were chosen to review the Minutes of 2025: Sharon Burlingame, Nan Jennings, and Myra Woods.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

2026 ANNUAL MEETING

LWVHC Proposed Budget 2026-27
including (but not limited to) the following anticipated budget items:

INCOME

Revenue

Member Dues	1,750	dues collection paid through LWVUS via Stripe Payment System
Donations	5,000	estimate
Interest Income	15	First Citizens Bank
Capital Appreciation	<u>475</u>	Community Foundation Henderson County
Total Revenue	7,240	

Grants

LWVUS	500	based on past grants
LWVNC	<u>500</u>	based on past grants
Total Grants	1,000	

Operating Income

Reserve	4,236	to cover possible shortage from expenses over income
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TOTAL INCOME \$ 12,476

EXPENSES

Administration

Advertising	800	banner ads in HVL Lightning (or other media) for program promotion
Board Expenses	1,000	retreat, room rentals, holiday party, printing, meet & greets, admin exp
PO Box	200	annual fee
Postage	10	stamps
Technology	1,200	website, QuickBooks, Canva, MailChimp, Zoom, A/V
Insurance	964	general liability policy & professional liability policy
Annual Meeting Expenses	600	refreshments, drinks, room rental, speaker gift, table decorations, printing
Professional Fees	<u>260</u>	Community Foundation management fees
Total Administration	5,034	

LWV Convention/Council

National (alternate years)	-	registration fees/expenses
State (alternate years)	<u>500</u>	registration fees/expenses
Total Convention	500	

Program Support

Voter Services

Operating Expenses	1,810	event fees, Vote411 signs, bracelets/buttons, print VR forms
VOTE411	1,532	media ads (HVL Lightning, WTZQ, Tryon, Transylvania), banner materials

Immigration Advocacy

300	speaker costs, meeting room expenses, printing, refreshments
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Home/Observer Team

300	refreshments, speaker honorariums, room rentals/donations to venues
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Education

Francee Sherman Award	1,000	two payments, half in June, remainder in January
Student Engagement - SVFD	500	gift cards, Vote411 posters, I Voted sticker contest winners
Teacher/Staff appreciation	500	thank you card printing, envelopes, candy for teachers, postage
Civics Learning Week	<u>1,000</u>	send HC educator to Civics Learning Week in Philadelphia 2027
Total Program Support	6,942	

Total Expenses \$ 12,476

NOMINATING COMMITTEE
PROPOSED SLATE for the 2026-2027 YEAR

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (term expires 2028)

Vice-President - Marcella Leshar

Treasurer- Jane DeMartini

DIRECTORS

Mary Landry term expires 2028

Pam Pazoles term expires 2028

Melissa Veasey term expires 2027

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (term expires 2027)

Sharon Burlingame

Caren Kessler

Patti Rogers

PROPOSED APPOINTED DIRECTORS (term expires 2027)

Peri David

Lois Pasapane

Linda Morris

Laurie Watt

CONTINUING ON BOARD: (term expires 2027)

President Liz Hill

Secretary Lynn McFarland

Director - Myra Woods

PROGRAM PRIORITIES FOR 2026-2027

By discussing and determining our priorities, we can direct our efforts, advocacy and actions both here and throughout the state. This year our priorities were determined through board and member discussions, team input and input from our local survey.

LWVHC plans to focus on the following priorities for 2026-2027.

- Public Education, to include state and local funding, vouchers, civics education, school board elections and more.
- Representative Government, focusing on sharing accurate election information with voters, communicating with elected and appointed officials, and continuing to speak out for fair district maps.
- Immigration and the impacts on agriculture, healthcare, construction, law enforcement- in short, on our entire community.

This year our priorities were sent to LWVUS as part of their data gathering survey for LWV's National Convention to be held June 25-28 in Columbus, Ohio.

2025-2026 Committee Reports LWVHC – League in Action

MEMBERSHIP

Our Membership Committee has welcomed 52 new members this year. Membership is currently 151, including four life members, Kathy Baluha, Marion Huffman, Lee Luebbe and our newest life member, Barbara Volk who joined in the Bicentennial year, 1976! We mourn the loss of Madeline Royes, who served as a City Council observer for many years, and Mary Garrison, who was a member of our League for 48 years.

We have acclimated to the new method of joining and renewing online through LWVUS' portal, and thank you for your patience in learning new skills as we have had to do.

Our initiatives this year have included assigning volunteer mentors to new members, and participating in the coffee socials at Dandelion and other places. For the coming year we plan to hold quarterly orientations.

Please contact us if you would like to be a mentor (or need one) or if you'd consider serving on the membership committee to welcome those new to League.

Submitted by Nan Jennings, Sharon Burlingame, Sandra Mowell, Membership

COMMUNICATIONS

Our team includes Jan Allen, Sheila Clendenning, Peri David, Tamara Einspajer, Liz Hill Nan Jennings, Rachel Poller, Kathy Trice, and Melissa Veasey. Highlights of our work:

- Send the twice monthly Update with LWVHC news, relevant events, and advocacy opportunities. These include the notes of meetings provided by our Observer Team.
- Send Press Releases to local media for our events or news items, as well as special email advocacy alerts. Help to prepare paid advertising (digital and print) as directed by the Board.
- Post news and events on Facebook and Instagram. We increased our reach due to the work done in the lead-up to our March primary.
- Create promotional flyers and graphics for events so they can be easily shared by other organizations.
- Ensure that important documents are properly stored on Google Workspace. Ensure that email contacts on Workspace are correct.
- Update the web site for election news, leadership changes, events, as needed.

If you enjoy being first to learn what's happening or helping to find ways to let others know about it, contact us; we would love to have more members helping to get the word out.

Submitted by Liz Hill

EDUCATION TEAM

The Education Team programs include Students Voting for Democracy, Student Engagement, and Teacher Appreciation Day. In addition, the team monitors local and state public school policies, issues and legislation. We send action alerts to the membership as necessary.

STUDENT VOTING FOR DEMOCRACY (SVFD)

Students Voting for Democracy was a collaborated effort with the Henderson County Schools to conduct a mock election for students during presidential and off-presidential year elections. The mock elections will no longer be held due to a component of the Parents Bill of Rights (passed by the North Carolina General Assembly) which requires parents consent for their children to participate in surveys.

The SVFD committee worked with the Henderson County Board of Elections to conduct an "I Voted" sticker contest for Henderson County Students. The HC BOE established the contest rules and conducted the contest. The SVFD committee contacted the Henderson County Public Schools, charter schools, private schools and home-school association, as well as the County Extension Service to advertise the "I Voted" sticker contest. They also sent electronic flyers about the contest to all school entities. Flyers were distributed to prominent local businesses to be displayed.

The Board of Elections will judge and announce the contest winners (K-grade2, grades 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.) The winning stickers will be printed by the BOE and distributed to county voters during the November 2026 general election. The League will use the winning stickers on the Vote 411 posters which the SVFD committee will distribute to all the public schools during early voting.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Francee Sherman Student Award

The Student Engagement Team awards the Francee Sherman Student Award, a \$1,000 scholarship, to a graduating Henderson County Public Schools student who plans to pursue post-secondary education. The award is promoted through Henderson County Public Schools and through the team's social media channels.

Read this year's winning essay, answering the question "What are the challenges in making informed decisions about issues and candidates before you vote?" [on our web site](#).

TEACHER APPRECIATION

The Education Team celebrated Teacher Appreciation Day in 2025 by writing thank-you notes to every teacher, administrator, bus driver, maintenance and cafeteria personnel. We delivered the notes with a bowl of candy to each school as well as the district office.

This year we plan to write Congratulation notes to every teacher honored by the School Board.

Submitted by Mary Landry, Education Team Chair

VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services is committed to being a visible presence in the community and providing Henderson, Transylvania and Polk County residents with election information along with opportunities to register to vote. To support outreach efforts Voter Services organizes through monthly meetings to keep our 93 Voter Services members informed, to secure volunteers to staff events, and to schedule Voter Registration Training.

It's been a busy season. In preparation for the mid-term elections the Voter Services team took election information and provided registration opportunities to 8 on-campus high school and BRCC registration events; to 4 pre-primary registration opportunities at the Library and the YMCA. We have participated in 6 Farmer's Markets, and in 6 Community Festivals extending over 9 days. Voter Services team members showed up for 74 volunteer opportunities during the year, and we attended both scheduled and online voter registration training delivered by Caren Kessler.

VOTE411

VOTE411 LWVUS, LWVNC, together with LWV Henderson County provide a comprehensive, nonpartisan online voter guide providing voters with needed information – including their registration status, where to vote, personalized ballot information, and individual candidate points of view. Our dedicated VOTE411 Team sent invitations to candidates requesting response to a standard set of issues-based questions. Recipients were every candidate running for offices in Henderson, Transylvania, and Polk Counties. Fourteen candidate responses were received for Henderson, Transylvania and Polk Counties. Ten candidates did not respond for various reasons.

Our VOTE411 goals for the 2026 primaries and mid-term elections set the stage for the November mid-terms. We assisted in creating candidate questions, contacted candidates, and provided support to candidates and voters alike as they accessed the website. Once again, we partnered with the Asheville-Buncombe League to expand our advertising reach. We also successfully ventured into targeted digital ads to reach more voters in Henderson, Polk, and Transylvania Counties. Special thanks to Team members Pam Johnson, Caren Kessler, Rachel Poller, Barb Jackson, Charlie Wilkinson, Lynn McFarland, John Ariatti, Chris Berg, Tamara Einspanjer, as well as Voter Service ballot checkers and road sign teams.

VOTE411 Roadside Signs and Candidate Information

Fourteen volunteers placed 91 signs along 10 of the 13 routes identified for sign placement. Three new VOTE411 banners were located in prominent sites; two in Hendersonville and one in Brevard. After a post-election review of the condition of the roadside signs, the team is evaluating options for replacement or refurbishment.

Education Funding Advocacy

Henderson County League members joined the LWVNC Resolves team led by Jeanne Smith and Lucy Bond. Barb Jackson of the Henderson County League mailed over 200 postcards to NC assembly members so far in 2026. Selected recipients were Assembly members from Henderson, Transylvania and Polk counties plus representatives from 12 counties where there is no LWV presence. The message to fully fund education was also communicated to the NC General Assembly from the nearly one thousand signatures of Henderson County citizens on a “fund education” petition, demonstrating the strength of voters’ commitment to resolve this budget gap.

What’s Missing for our Future

In collaboration with other local civic organizations, the LWV of Henderson County should identify and monitor risks to election integrity for the November mid-term election.

Submitted by Myra Woods, Voter Services Chair

IMMIGRATION TEAM

The Immigration Team continues to initiate partnerships and network with local organizations working directly with the immigrant and migrant communities. Organizations such as True Ridge, El Centro, the Literacy Connection, Blue Ridge Community Health Services, and groups which provide welcome bags to seasonal migrant workers are invited to share information at our monthly meetings. The team studied immigration issues and worked on the following during the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

1. The Team studied [American Dragnet Data Driven Deportation in the 21st Century](#) a report of the Georgetown Law Center on Privacy and Technology at our monthly meetings.
2. We co-sponsored with the Home Observer Team, Immigration & Citizenship: Where We Are Now & How We Got Here on November 18, 2025.
3. We co-sponsored with El Centro Latino Advocacy Coalition, Immigration Policy in North Carolina and Beyond on February 24, 2026.

4. We formally supported the proposal for national concurrence on the [LWVWA Protecting the Rights of Immigrants](#) which will be voted on at 2026 National Convention.

We continue to maintain a bilingual list of services for the Hispanic Community entitled [Resources List for Latino and Other Migrant Families in Henderson County](#).

One of our primary goals is to build and share our knowledge about immigration policy at the state and federal levels as we move forward to educate ourselves and advocate for immigration reform. We also seek to understand how immigration policy and the immigrant experience impact the lives of our own community members. We continue to follow the guidance of [LWV National advocacy statement on immigration](#) as it helps to set our own priorities.

Submitted by Marcella Leshner, Immigration Chair

HOME and OBSERVER (H/OT) TEAM

The H/OT Team was on fire again this year as we promoted informed citizen participation. Our members observed, reported, and/or served on county/municipal boards including: County Commissioners, Education, Elections (both Henderson and Polk counties), Planning, Health, Social Services, Library, and Recreation Advisory. H/OT also regularly observes: Hendersonville City Council, Sustainability, Environmental Advisory Committee, Farmland Preservation Taskforce, Southern Mountains Homeless Coalition, and the Local Government Committee for Cooperative Action,. Summary notes are provided in the Update.

In meeting/communicating with elected and appointed officials as well as county/municipal employees, we shared League information, asked questions, made suggestions, and discussed ways to promote civic engagement.

We hosted 4 informative public programs: Eat to Beat the Heat: The Link Between Food and Climate Change; Why Local News Matters; We Didn't Vote for Dirty Air or Dirty Water; and The ABC's of the NC Judiciary. Well-attended, each program provided attendees with information about issues affecting all of us, opportunities to ask questions, and suggested ways to get involved.

At monthly meetings, we discuss local issues and how League can support citizen participation. Several H/OT members serve on municipal and community boards and organizations and a number of us reach out regularly to promote civic engagement by participating in LWVHC Ears on Main Street initiative where we listen to the concerns of passersby we "interview" in downtown Hendersonville. Please join us as we learn and share among League and community members.

Submitted by Rachel Poller, Home & Observer (H/OT) Chair

Past Leadership of League of Women Voters of Henderson County

1963-1965	Francee Sherman
1965-1968	Eleanor Cosgrove
1968-1971	Rita Hopkins
1971-1973	Margaret Milroy
1973-1975	Sally Godehn
1975-1977	Kathy Baluha
1977-1978	Crystal Smith
1978-1981	Kathy Baluha
1981-1983	Renee Kumor
1983-1985	Barbara Volk
1985-1987	Mercedes Town
1987-1989	Linda Hawk
1989-1991	Marian Lowry
1991-1993	Grace Poli
1993-1995	Marion Huffman and Joyce Daly
1995-1997	Rebecca Sigmon and Marcia Grady
1997-1999	Rebecca Sigmon
1999-2001	Marion Lowry and Ann Feldstein
2001-2003	Marion Lowry and Acee Hughes
2003-2005	Marion Lowry and Lee Luebbe
2005-2007	Lee Luebbe
2007-2011	Nancy Glowacki
2011-2014	Judy Katz
2014-2016	Sharon Burlingame
2016-2017	Sharon Burlingame and Judith Scruggs
2017-2019	Nan Jennings and Rachel Poller
2019-2021	Rachel Poller
2021-2023	Brenda Sherrer
2023-2025	Ernest Mowell
2025-2026	Liz Hill

LWVHC NON-PARTISAN POLICY

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government at all levels. The League of Women Voters is non-partisan in that it does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. It is political in that it takes positions on selected public policy issues after study and consensus. The League recognizes the role of political parties in government and believes that participation in the activities of parties is an essential ingredient of citizen responsibility.

While the League urges its members to be politically active and participate fully in party activities on an individual basis, certain constraints are necessary to maintain the nonpartisanship of the League as an organization. Therefore:

At any League-sponsored activity, members shall not engage in partisan discussions or activities.

LWVHC
PO Box 1163
Flat Rock, NC 28731

Henderson County League of Women Voters Education Fund
/DBA League of Women Voters Henderson County is recognized by the IRS as a
501(c)(3) tax exempt